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Diseases, Insects, Pests

Alberta AGRICULTURE

Revised June, 1991 92-00022/ Agdex 684-9

Livestock Predator Compensation Program

The Livestock Predator Compensation Program has been in place since the early 1970s. The main objective of the program is to reduce conflicts between farmer/rancher and wildlife interests by providing compensation to farmers and ranchers with the goal of reducing indiscriminate killing of predating species of wildlife. The level of compensation under the program provides substantial but not full compensation. The purpose of partial compensation is to encourage producers to initiate prevention/control measures by bearing some of the costs of predation. The program operates under a Ministerial Order providing compensation to farmers/ranchers for documented losses of food producing animals as a result of attacks by predating species of wildlife.

Who can claim

To be eligilble for compensation you must be a bona fide farmer making a significant portion of your income from agricultural production for commercial purposes. You must also verify that there have been no previous reimbursements for any of the animals lost. Livestock covered under this compensation program are defined as food producing animals, namely: cattle, sheep, bison, hogs, goats, rabbits and poultry. Horses are **not** included as food-producing animals.

Poultry losses are eligible for compensation only if poultry have been adequately confined. (See Agdex 450/684-1)

A predator as defined for this program means a wild animal such as: bear, wolf, coyote, cougar, lynx, fox, bobcat, owl, hawk, skunk, weasel, mink, and raccoon.

There is no compensation for any predation caused by dogs. In the case of predation caused by domestic dogs, reimbursement of losses should usually be claimed through the insurance policy of the dog owner, otherwise civil action may be required.

Who to contact

When livestock predation occurs, it is important that you promptly contact a designated investigator. Normally, your first call should be to the municipal agricultural fieldman for losses caused by coyotes or skunks, or to Alberta Fish and Wildlife where other predators might be involved. However, any of the following officials may be contacted regarding investigations, assessments and verification of evidence for compensation under the livestock predator compensation program:

- agricultural fieldmen
- fish & wildlife officers
- agriculture problem wildlife specialists
- district agriculturists
- veterinarians
- police officers

Remember, all predation claims must be investigated by a designated official. The amount of compensation depends directly on the evidence of predation that the investigator is able to observe.

Compensation

If the claimant meets the established eligibility requirements and satisfies the committee that predation was a valid factor, then compensation will be offered as follows.

Kind of loss	Compensation
Confirmed Loss — When the investigator views a livestock loss and can conclude from evidence observed that livestock death was directly caused by predator activity.	Up to 100% of commercial value at the time of loss.
Probable Loss — when an investigator views a livestock loss, but evidence is insufficient to conclude that livestock death was a direct result of predator activity. To be eligible, all probable losses must be associated with a confirmed loss in both time and location. Heavily scavaged or decomposed carcasses commonly fit into the category.	Up to 50% of commercial value at the time of loss.

There is a $100 deductible applied to each claimant once in each calendar year.

Copies of this and related publications may be obtained from the Print Media Branch, Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6 or Alberta Agriculture's District Offices.

The owner of an animal injured by a predator may destroy that animal for humane reasons and the investigator may recommend that full or partial payment be awarded.

Claims for compensation must be completed on a designated *Livestock Predator Claim Form*, signed by both the claimant and the investigator, and submitted to the Chairman, Livestock Predator Committee, #905 O. S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 St., Edmonton T6H 4P2. The committee will accept and examine all claims received.

No payments are made to claimants:

- if losses total less than the $100 deductible
- if an inspector does not directly observe the livestock loss or if the animals are missing
- for loss of production or incidental expenses such as transportation or veterinarian fees
- if negligence or mismanagement on the part of the owner is a factor.

The livestock predator compensation program is considered an extra tool for reducing the effect of predation. The responsibility for minimizing predation still lies with the producer.

Payments are awarded on the basis of the normal commercial market value for each class of animal at the time of loss. Payment rates are reviewed from time to time to reflect current slaughter prices. No extra payments are awarded above the commercial value for purebred or registered stock.

If a claimant is not satisfied with the committee's decision as to compensation, he/she may request a rehearing through the office of the Farmer's Advocate. The claimant can also provide the chairman, of the livestock predator committee with new information. The chairman will then examine this new information and can recommend a rehearing.

There are two committees in Alberta that examine all claims. One committee handles all Peace River claims. The second committee meets in Edmonton and handles claims from the balance of the province. Each committee includes representatives of farmers actively engaged in livestock production, and public servants from the Alberta Agriculture animal industry, animal health and plant industry divisions, and the Alberta fish and wildlife division. These committees meet according to demand, usually three times a year.

If you have suffered livestock losses due to predator activity:

- Promptly call a designated investigator who is required to verify such losses. The investigator will assist you in completion and submission of your claim.
- Prevent scavenging animals from removing evidence. Direct evidence is important to the investigator. Photographs can be useful.

Information prepared by:

Eric Hutchings,
Regional Supervisor of Problem Wildlife
Lethbridge

1991 06 3M